

Claim Listing:

This Claim Listing reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application. Material to be inserted is in **bold and underline**, and material to be deleted is in ~~strikeout~~ or (if the deletion is of five or fewer consecutive characters or would be difficult to see) in double brackets [[]].

In brief, claims 43, 45, 53, 97, and 98 have been canceled, without prejudice; claims 41 and 44 have been amended; and new claims 101–156 have been added.

1.–40. (Canceled)

41. (Currently Amended) A method of fusing at least two bones of a hand or a foot, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface and further including a post extending from the bone-facing surface of the body portion;

forming a cavity defined by at least two bones of a hand or a foot, the step of forming including a step of reaming to form a portion of the cavity;

placing the bone plate into the cavity such that the body portion is received in the portion of the cavity and such that the post restricts movement of the body portion; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using fasteners,

wherein the step of reaming forms adjoining first and second portions of the cavity, wherein the first portion of the cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second portion of the cavity is shaped according to the post,

wherein the step of placing disposes the post in the second portion of the cavity, and wherein the second portion of the cavity is formed partially by a pre-existing gap between the at least two bones.

42. (Canceled)

43. (Canceled)

44. (Currently Amended) The method of claim **41** [[43]], wherein the first and second portions of the cavity are formed in a single step.

45. (Canceled)

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a bone-facing surface that is convex, and wherein the step of forming includes a step of forming a cavity at least partially defined by a concave bone surface.

47. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post formed unitarily with the body portion.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post that is a separate component attached to the body portion, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the body portion and the post as a unit into the cavity.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a post disposed in threaded engagement with the body portion.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post substantially centered on the body portion.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface having a rough texture, and wherein the step of placing positions the rough texture adjacent bone.

52. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

53. (Canceled)

54. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion having a bone-opposing surface and a central region, and wherein the central region defines a blind opening extending into the body portion from the bone-opposing surface.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining a central axis and a plurality of openings arranged around the central axis, wherein each of the plurality of openings defines an axis extending obliquely to the central axis, and wherein the step of attaching includes a step of placing bone screws through at least two of the plurality of openings.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a cap configured to be attached to the body portion such that the cap obstructs out-of-bone movement of at least one of the fasteners after the at least one fastener has attached the body portion to bone.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion defining at least one slot configured such that a bone screw can be placed at multiple positions along the slot.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the body portion further includes a perimeter and a bone-opposing surface that opposes the bone-facing surface, and wherein the thickness of the perimeter is greater than the average thickness of the body portion measured between the bone-facing and bone-opposing surfaces.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the bone-facing surface corresponds to a portion of a sphere having a center, and wherein the step of placing restricts pivotal motion of the body portion about a plurality of axes extending through the center.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, the bone plate including a plurality of openings, wherein the step of attaching including a step of placing bone screws through the plurality of openings and into the at least two bones.

61. (Canceled)

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion having a width and a height, and wherein the height is substantially less than half the width.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion and a post each having a width, and wherein the width of the post is about one-fifth the width of the body portion.

64. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate with a body portion having a height measured parallel to a central axis defined by the post, and wherein the post extends from the bone-facing surface by a distance less than the height.

65.–95. (Canceled)

96. (Previously Presented) A method of fusing at least two bones, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface and further including a post extending from the bone-facing surface of the body portion;

placing the bone plate into a cavity formed by at least two bones of a hand or a foot such that the post restricts movement of the body portion; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using fasteners,

wherein the body portion further includes a perimeter and a bone-opposing surface that opposes the bone-facing surface, and wherein the thickness of the perimeter is greater than the average thickness of the body portion measured between the bone-facing and bone-opposing surfaces.

97. (Canceled)

98. (Canceled)

99. (Previously Presented) A method of fusing at least two bones of a hand, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface and further including a post extending from the bone-facing surface of the body portion;

placing the bone plate into a cavity formed by at least two bones of a hand such that the post extends into a portion of the cavity defined by at least a pair of carpal bones of the hand to restrict movement of the body portion; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using fasteners.

100. (Previously Presented) A method of fusing at least two bones of a hand, comprising:

selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface and further including a post extending from the bone-facing surface of the body portion;

placing the bone plate into a cavity formed by at least two bones of a hand such that the post restricts movement of the body portion and such that the body portion is disposed in a recess formed selectively on a dorsal side of the at least two bones; and

attaching the bone plate to the at least two bones using fasteners.

101. (New) The method of claim 96, further comprising a step of forming adjoining first and second portions of the cavity, wherein the first portion of the cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second portion of the cavity is shaped according to the post.

102. (New) The method of claim 101, wherein the first and second portions of the cavity are formed in a single step.

103. (New) The method of claim 101, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a bone-facing surface that is convex, and wherein the step of forming includes a step of forming a cavity at least partially defined by a concave bone surface.

104. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post formed unitarily with the body portion.

105. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post that is a separate component attached to the body portion, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the body portion and the post as a unit into the cavity.

106. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a post disposed in threaded engagement with the body portion.

107. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post substantially centered on the body portion.

108. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface having a rough texture, and wherein the step of placing positions the rough texture adjacent bone.

109. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

110. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion having a bone-opposing surface and a central region, and wherein the central region defines a blind opening extending into the body portion from the bone-opposing surface.

111. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining a central axis and a plurality of openings arranged around the central axis, wherein each of the plurality of openings defines an axis extending obliquely to the central axis, and wherein the step of attaching includes a step of placing bone screws through at least two of the plurality of openings.

112. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a cap configured to be attached to the body portion such that the cap obstructs out-of-bone movement of at least one of the fasteners after the at least one fastener has attached the body portion to bone.

113. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion defining at least one slot configured such that a bone screw can be placed at multiple positions along the slot.

114. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the bone-facing surface corresponds to a portion of a sphere having a center, and wherein the step of placing restricts pivotal motion of the body portion about a plurality of axes extending through the center.

115. (New) The method of claim 96, the bone plate including a plurality of openings, wherein the step of attaching including a step of placing bone screws through the plurality of openings and into the at least two bones.

116. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion having a width and a height, and wherein the height is substantially less than half the width.

117. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion and a post each having a width, and wherein the width of the post is about one-fifth the width of the body portion.

118. (New) The method of claim 96, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate with a body portion having a height measured parallel to a central axis defined by the post, and wherein the post extends from the bone-facing surface by a distance less than the height.

119. (New) The method of claim 99, further comprising a step of forming adjoining first and second portions of the cavity, wherein the first portion of the cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second portion of the cavity is shaped according to the post.

120. (New) The method of claim 119, wherein the first and second portions of the cavity are formed in a single step.

121. (New) The method of claim 119, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a bone-facing surface that is convex, and wherein the step of forming includes a step of forming a cavity at least partially defined by a concave bone surface.

122. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post formed unitarily with the body portion.

123. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post that is a separate component attached to the body portion, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the body portion and the post as a unit into the cavity.

124. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a post disposed in threaded engagement with the body portion.

125. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post substantially centered on the body portion.

126. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface having a rough texture, and wherein the step of placing positions the rough texture adjacent bone.

127. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

128. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion having a bone-opposing surface and a central region, and wherein the central region defines a blind opening extending into the body portion from the bone-opposing surface.

129. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining a central axis and a plurality of openings arranged around the central axis, wherein each of the plurality of openings defines an axis extending obliquely to the central axis, and wherein the step of attaching includes a step of placing bone screws through at least two of the plurality of openings.

130. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a cap configured to be attached to the body portion such that the cap obstructs out-of-bone movement of at least one of the fasteners after the at least one fastener has attached the body portion to bone.

131. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion defining at least one slot configured such that a bone screw can be placed at multiple positions along the slot.

132. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the body portion further includes a perimeter and a bone-opposing surface that opposes the bone-facing surface, and wherein the thickness of the perimeter is greater than the average thickness of the body portion measured between the bone-facing and bone-opposing surfaces.

133. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the bone-facing surface corresponds to a portion of a sphere having a center, and wherein the step of placing restricts pivotal motion of the body portion about a plurality of axes extending through the center.

134. (New) The method of claim 99, the bone plate including a plurality of openings, wherein the step of attaching including a step of placing bone screws through the plurality of openings and into the at least two bones.

135. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion having a width and a height, and wherein the height is substantially less than half the width.

136. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion and a post each having a width, and wherein the width of the post is about one-fifth the width of the body portion.

137. (New) The method of claim 99, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate with a body portion having a height measured parallel to a central axis defined by the post, and wherein the post extends from the bone-facing surface by a distance less than the height.

138. (New) The method of claim 100, further comprising a step of forming adjoining first and second portions of the cavity, wherein the first portion of the cavity is shaped according to the bone-facing surface, and wherein the second portion of the cavity is shaped according to the post.

139. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein the first and second portions of the cavity are formed in a single step.

140. (New) The method of claim 138, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a bone-facing surface that is convex, and wherein the step of forming includes a step of forming a cavity at least partially defined by a concave bone surface.

141. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post formed unitarily with the body portion.

142. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post that is a separate component attached to the body portion, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the body portion and the post as a unit into the cavity.

143. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having a post disposed in threaded engagement with the body portion.

144. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a post substantially centered on the body portion.

145. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface having a rough texture, and wherein the step of placing positions the rough texture adjacent bone.

146. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion with a bone-facing surface corresponding to a portion of a sphere.

147. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a body portion having a bone-opposing surface and a central region, and wherein the central region defines a blind opening extending into the body portion from the bone-opposing surface.

148. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining a central axis and a plurality of openings arranged around the central axis, wherein each of the plurality of openings defines an axis extending obliquely to the central axis, and wherein the step of attaching includes a step of placing bone screws through at least two of the plurality of openings.

149. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate including a cap configured to be attached to the body portion such that the cap obstructs out-of-bone movement of at least one of the fasteners after the at least one fastener has attached the body portion to bone.

150. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion defining at least one slot configured such that a bone screw can be placed at multiple positions along the slot.

151. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the body portion further includes a perimeter and a bone-opposing surface that opposes the bone-facing surface, and wherein the thickness of the perimeter is greater than the average thickness of the body portion measured between the bone-facing and bone-opposing surfaces.

152. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the bone-facing surface corresponds to a portion of a sphere having a center, and wherein the step of placing restricts pivotal motion of the body portion about a plurality of axes extending through the center.

153. (New) The method of claim 100, the bone plate including a plurality of openings, wherein the step of attaching including a step of placing bone screws through the plurality of openings and into the at least two bones.

154. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion having a width and a height, and wherein the height is substantially less than half the width.

155. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a body portion and a post each having a width, and wherein the width of the post is about one-fifth the width of the body portion.

156. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate with a body portion having a height measured parallel to a central axis defined by the post, and wherein the post extends from the bone-facing surface by a distance less than the height.